



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

November 8, 2002

H.R. 5215 **Confidential Information Protection and** **Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Government Reform
on October 9, 2002*

H.R. 5215 would allow the Census Bureau, the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to undertake joint statistical projects and share business data, subject to certain confidentiality restrictions. The bill also would create new criminal fines for any employee from those agencies that purposefully discloses data in violation of the bill's confidentiality provisions.

Enacting H.R. 5215 could result in the collection of additional criminal fines. Such fines are deposited in the Crime Victims Fund and spent in subsequent years. However, CBO estimates that any increase in revenues and direct spending would be negligible.

CBO also expects that allowing the Census Bureau and BLS to share business data could generate cost savings for the two agencies. Under current law, statistical agencies cannot exchange such data, and therefore sometimes collect duplicative information. For example, the Census Bureau and BLS together typically spend about \$150 million a year to collect and process data for their own independent lists of business establishments. Under H.R. 5215, these agencies could create one master list and potentially reduce total data collection and maintenance costs. Based on information from the two agencies, the Office of Management and Budget, and the General Accounting Office, CBO estimates that, after an implementation period of two or three years, the Census Bureau and BLS could achieve savings of up to \$10 million annually, assuming that appropriations for the two agencies are reduced accordingly.

H.R. 5215 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Ken Johnson and Christina Hawley Sadoti. The estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.